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May 15, 2009

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I am pleased to submit with this letter our Application for Initial Funding under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Program. I have designated the Commonwealth's Secretary of Education, Paul Reville, as my authorized representative for purposes of preparing the Application and making the required certifications.

I would like to thank you for providing our state with this unprecedented and exceptional infusion of State Fiscal Stabilization funding, which offers much-needed relief to our students and educators in pre-kindergarten through post-secondary institutions. In addition to saving and creating jobs and ensuring that institutions receive the resources they need to operate to the high standards we expect, this funding will help us to continue our pioneering role as a leader in public school innovation.

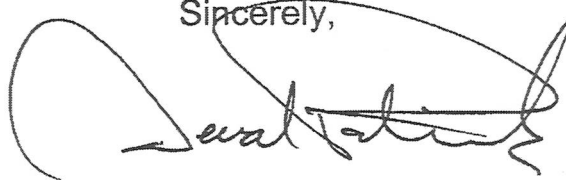
In Massachusetts, we have made great strides in developing rigorous standards for all students and fostering the knowledge and skills required to meet and exceed them. We are working with educators, faculty members and administrators at institutions of higher education, and other stakeholders to improve teacher recruitment, preparation, training, and retention programs. We are continuing our efforts to create a statewide data system that will provide information about students across the pre-K through 16 education continuum. We are developing proactive and innovative strategies to provide more targeted and differentiated support to

schools and districts most in need of assistance. Lastly, we are thinking broadly about how to unleash innovation throughout the state so that we can truly transform our education system and better serve the needs of all of our students.

But we still have work to do. Our key challenges include closing persistent achievement gaps in order to allow all students to achieve their full potential, addressing the different educational and other needs of all students across the state, and ensuring that all students are ready to successfully pursue post-secondary educational and employment opportunities. To that end, we have begun to move forward on several of the priorities outlined in the Education Action Agenda of our Readiness Project, including the development of in-district schools that will operate with many of the autonomies put to effective use in charter schools, the creation of regional centers charged with enhancing the quality of teaching, and the re-organization of districts to augment capacity and maximize efficiency for the purpose of boosting educational programs. In addition, we continue to deepen our understanding of the barriers to learning and the successful strategies for addressing them through the collection and analysis of data.

In this extremely difficult economic context, I commend the leadership of you and President Obama in demonstrating the critical importance of investing in our future, and I look forward to working with you to advance your robust reform agenda, which represents our shared vision of the potential of our education system to prepare all students to be productive and successful citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written over a large, loopy flourish that starts under the word "Sincerely," and extends to the left and then loops back around.